

Israel against terrorist attacks. He has a responsibility to do what he can to prevent similar attacks from occurring in the future.

Israel is an ally—our closest friend in the Middle East. We share its strong commitment to democracy, to the rule of law, and to a peaceful solution to this conflict, a solution that leaves two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

Yesterday, the Senate passed a resolution reaffirming its steadfast support for Israel in its fight against these vicious terrorists and other extremists who target Israeli citizens and exploit their own civilian populations as shields.

Hezbollah and Hamas must immediately and unconditionally release the captured Israeli soldiers and cease their rocket attacks against Israel. The state sponsors of these groups in Syria and Iran must be held to account.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, may I inquire about the regular order?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. We are in morning business with the first half of the time of 1 hour under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today deeply disturbed after watching the situation in Israel continuing to escalate over the last few days. Israel, over the last 3 years, has acted in a responsible manner and done everything possible, in my view, to reach out to those who desire peace. Unfortunately, there remain those who continue to disregard the Israeli State and refuse to recognize its legitimacy.

Sadly, these terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah remain committed to their ideology of hatred toward the Jewish people and appear determined to try to bring an end to the State of Israel. As such, I strongly support Israel's response to the unprovoked kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers and the unprecedented rocket bombardment of northern Israel.

The current Israeli action is justified. Action is necessary to stop those who are responsible for these despicable acts of terror. The attempts to defend Israel and rescue its captured soldiers with airstrikes and incursions by Israeli forces are not only appropriate but are absolutely necessary to protect Israeli citizens from future terrorist attacks.

Ultimately, I believe outside actors, such as Syria and Iran, which continue to support terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah are the main culprits. These nations have done nothing to promote peace in the region. I believe the United States and the community of nations should put these nations on notice that their support for terrorism is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

President Bush has likewise called out Syria and Iran for their support of Hezbollah by stating:

The one way to help heal the Middle East is to address the root causes of the problems there, and the root cause of the problem is Hezbollah and Syria and the Iranian connection.

No one doubts that with the support these nations provide to Hezbollah they could bring an end to the hostilities in the region. Instead, they would rather Hezbollah continue to use innocent citizens as shields while the terrorist organization conducts attacks against a sovereign nation. They need to abide by the already passed United Nations resolution and end support for Hezbollah.

That is why I rise in support of S. Res. 534 condemning Hezbollah and their sponsors, and I also ask to be added as a cosponsor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, our ally, Israel, is entitled to the defense of its land. We as a body should again recognize this act and support Israel's right to self-defense while calling for the Syrians and the Iranians to take responsibility for these open hostilities. They must help immediately to withdraw all terrorist forces from Lebanon and end their support for Hezbollah's action against our allies. We also must ensure that the U.N. Security Council enforces the full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559, which in 2004 called for disarming Hezbollah and the removal of all foreign forces from Lebanon. We must use all of the tools at our disposal to discontinue the financial, military, and political support Hezbollah and Hamas receive from these state sponsors of terror.

Of course, during this crisis I would be remiss if I did not mention my grave concern about the loss of innocent life in Israel, Lebanon, and Gaza. During the past week, Hezbollah has continued to fire rockets and mortars into civilian areas, killing multiple Israelis, among others. As much as I believe it is imperative that the United States stand behind Israel in its time of need, we also must provide assistance to those who have been hurt because of this conflict.

It is my strong belief that the United States should do everything in its power to assure Israel's right to exist and right to protect its borders. Israel must be allowed to live without fear within those borders. It is my hope that this conflict will be resolved peacefully in the coming days. The people of Israel have not asked for more than that, and I believe they certainly deserve as much.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

WORLD SECURITY AND ENERGY

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I have come to the Chamber this morning to talk about energy, an important issue that affects not only our cost of living but our Nation's security. But before I do, I wish to say I was pleased, as my

colleague just mentioned, that last night the Senate voted unanimously to recognize the inherent right of our ally, Israel, to defend itself against terrorist aggression. Israel has a responsibility to protect its citizens, just as the United States does, and no nation should have to live under the constant fear of missile attacks or kidnapping.

The recent violence in the Middle East is demonstrating how broad this global war against radical Islamic murderers really is and how much nations such as Iran and Syria are funding these radical extremists. As Israel fights to defend its way of life from Hezbollah and Hamas and other radical Islamic terrorist groups, America will continue to support their efforts to defend their freedom.

As we fight to secure our homeland from future attacks by completing our mission in Iraq and hunting down terrorists around the world, I am proud we took the time last night to recognize Israel's struggle and express our solidarity behind them.

I would like to spend the rest of my time this morning talking about the energy crisis we are facing at home. Americans everywhere are paying the price.

For years, Democrats have complained about high energy prices and blocked the very solutions that would have lowered them and then attempted to blame Republicans for not doing enough.

American businesses, both large and small, are feeling the pinch. Recent estimates show that, since the year 2000, 3.1 million high-wage manufacturing jobs have been eliminated and moved overseas, where energy supplies are plentiful and costs are lower.

American families are struggling to make ends meet. In a recent survey, nearly 80 percent thought the rising cost of energy was hurting our economy and threatening jobs; 90 percent of those polled said that high energy costs were impacting their family budget. Despite having been through the warmest winter on record, heating bills for homes using natural gas went up over 25 percent. Last year, the percentage of credit card bills 30 days or more past due reached the highest level since the American Banking Association began recording this information in 1973. The ABA's chief economist cited high gasoline prices as the major factor.

One letter I received recently from a South Carolinian detailed how his father, who was on a fixed income, was forced to choose between paying for his medicine and putting gas in his car. Another constituent wrote that rising energy costs seriously threatened her family farm, due to the increased cost of vehicle operation, fertilizer, and irrigation.

With all this news, is it any wonder that Americans are discouraged when they see the partisan obstruction coming from Washington Democrats? The American people need answers, not

more obstruction. We recently had good news that Republican tax cuts continue to produce strong economic growth and have helped to create 5.4 million new jobs since 2003. But even as the economy grows and wages rise, family checkbooks still feel the pressure. If you get a \$25-a-week raise but you have to spend \$50 a week more to fill up your car with gas, you are still \$25 worse off than you were when you started. It is no wonder that American's optimism about their economic future has faded as concerns over the cost of living have increased.

There is no quick fix to this dilemma, but there are many things that will work together to secure our economic prosperity. We can address rising health care prices by passing small business health plans to make health insurance more affordable—another item my Democratic colleagues have obstructed this year. We can return more control to patients by ensuring that every American has a health plan that they can own and afford and keep.

We can invest in the flexibility and choice necessary to train the best workforce in the world. It is not going to help to raise the minimum wage a dollar or two. We need to work on maximum wages for Americans by creating more qualified workers.

We can work to increase our natural gas and oil supplies. That will reduce the cost of gas, it will increase America's supply of energy, and encourage conservation. We can reduce the dependence on foreign oil. There is a lot we can do if we can work together in the Congress to pass new energy legislation.

The good news is that Republicans are working, one step at a time, to get these things done. In the next few weeks, the Senate will debate critical legislation to increase America's deep sea exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. This could help, again, to lower energy costs across the Nation. Unfortunately, some Democrats have already threatened to obstruct this important bill that would keep American energy prices competitive and hopefully lower them in the future.

We are still waiting for these same Democrats to offer any immediate solutions on their own. Strong economic growth in America and around the world has greatly increased the demand for already limited supplies of energy. We are now competing with other nations, not just for jobs but for the energy that powers those jobs.

Our energy problems did not occur overnight and they will not be fixed overnight. But if we fail to address rising American energy costs, we will create yet another incentive for businesses to locate overseas and leave American workers behind.

To keep the United States competitive, we must transform our energy policy to meet pressing short-term needs while exploring new alternative solutions to meet long-term needs for abundant, affordable, and emission-free

energy. Currently, expensive and time-consuming permitting processes, extensive regulatory burdens, and overly bureaucratic environmental hurdles have made it cheaper to import our oil and natural gas from the Middle East than to use our own domestic resources. This makes no sense. To address the short-term issue of constantly fluctuating energy prices, we must eliminate these Government-imposed regulatory roadblocks in order to increase our energy supply and get these resources to consumers quickly and affordably. We can unshackle American entrepreneurs, the best in the world, and allow them to fully develop our natural resources and still protect our environment.

The long-term policy must focus on creating a diverse energy infrastructure that includes new technologies such as hydrogen, fuel cells, and other alternative forms of energy. Many of these technologies, currently in the early stages of development, have shown great promise and can revolutionize the way we fuel our cars, homes, and businesses.

Energy costs are on the rise and the ball is in the Democrats' court. Republicans have put forth practical solutions, such as the deep sea development that we will be talking about over the next weeks. These will diversify our energy infrastructure and supply affordable, abundant, and environmentally friendly energy, and most important, reduce the cost of living for American families.

I ask my Democratic colleagues to reject their leadership's tired strategy of blocking real solutions and then trying to blame Republicans when the problems don't get solved. Working together, we can bring down the cost of living and improve the quality of life for every American as we reduce the cost of gas and increase America's supply of energy. We can still encourage conservation, while reducing our dependence on foreign oil.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). The Senator from the great State of Arizona.

MR. KYL. Mr. President, I thank the majority and minority leaders for setting aside some time today to discuss the situation in the Middle East. While news of Israeli airstrikes and Hezbollah rocket attacks have dominated the airwaves for over a week now, the issue has not been extensively debated on the floor of the Senate. What we have now, today, is an opportunity to stand together as the Senate and send an unequivocal message of support to our Israeli allies in their time of need.

I am speaking about the Senate resolution which was adopted last evening, crafted in a bipartisan way by the majority and minority leaders of the Senate, a resolution which I am proud to cosponsor and which I believe eloquently expresses what I believe to be the true sense of this body and of the American people. It rightly points out

that Israel has complied with the relevant Security Council resolutions regarding withdrawal from Lebanon and that, by contrast, Lebanon has failed to follow through on its obligation to disarm Hezbollah. The resolution correctly identifies the nexus of the problem not in Beirut or Gaza but in Tehran and Damascus, where State sponsorship of terrorism has reached new and disturbing levels.

Finally, this resolution encourages continued U.S. support for Israel and renewed international action to end the conflict by eliminating support and freedom of action of Hezbollah. It is, in summary, an important expression by the Senate.

I would like to take a moment now to address some arguments made by some over the years that Americans are too quick to equate our interests with those of Israel. There are recent articles by respected scholars who have argued that the role of the United States should be to push Israel toward an accommodation with these terrorists, the same terrorists bent on her destruction, rather than standing by her as she tries to lay the foundation for a lasting peace.

I think this past week's conflict exposes the utter fallacy of that perspective. Israel is under attack today, not just from Hezbollah and Hamas but from Iran and Syria, the two most active State sponsors of global terrorism. Right now the United States is struggling with these same two countries over their counterproductive roles in Iraq, their WMD programs, and their role in financing and equipping terrorists throughout the world.

The kind of attacks that Israel is enduring today could be visited on the United States or our troops tomorrow. For example, late last week an advanced Israeli warship was hit with an Iranian antiship missile. Despite the high-tech countermeasures on that ship, four sailors are now presumed lost. It is not hard to imagine these very same missiles used against American ships in the future, especially if the Iranians decide to blockade the Strait of Hormuz in response to U.S. pressure over that nuclear program. The attack on that ship can easily be perceived as directed as much against the U.S. Navy as it is against the Israeli Navy.

Those fighting international terrorism are bound at the hip in this conflict. To believe otherwise is the height of foolishness.

William Kristol stated in an editorial yesterday:

It's our war. For while Syria and Iran are enemies of Israel, they are also enemies of the United States. We have done a poor job of standing up to them and weakening them. They are now testing us more boldly than one would have thought possible a few years ago. Weakness is provocative. We have been too weak, and have allowed ourselves to be perceived as weak.

This conflict, in short, is not just about the interests of the Israeli or Palestinian or Lebanese people. It is

about a broader state-sponsored jihad against Western civilization, a war in which we cannot afford to stumble or waver or appear to be weak. The Senate resolution is a sign that we will not stumble, that we stand by our Israeli allies as they fight on the frontlines of this war against terrorists. That the people of Lebanon have gotten caught in the middle of this war is not simply regrettable, it is criminal. But make no mistake who the perpetrators are: Iran and Syria and the terrorist groups they equip and encourage. This axis of violence cannot be allowed to operate with impunity against the State of Israel.

The solution to this current crisis will not be easy. But the first step was identified by President Bush, in what some have characterized as an overly candid conversation with Tony Blair in Saint Petersburg. Paraphrasing the President, he said the international community must put pressure on Iran and Syria to curb the actions of their terrorist proxy armies.

At the same time, the Government of Lebanon must act swiftly and directly to dismantle the Hezbollah infrastructure that threatens northern Israel. When these processes are in motion and the kidnapped Israeli soldiers have been returned, then is the time to again move toward the end game of this crisis.

Many in the international community have urged restraint on the part of Israel in facing this crisis. They talk about proportionality. I think we can all agree that in international relations, restraint is generally a good thing, but Israeli restraint and forbearance should only be given in response to action on the other side. Israel's response against terrorism cannot be proportionate. It must be effective. Absent action by the international community and the Lebanese Government, restraint will look like weakness to Israel's enemies. And any show of weakness will only bring more blood-thirsty attacks.

This is the experience of the region. This is the history of the region. No sovereign nation would tolerate the type of attacks that Israel has endured, nor would they prioritize restraint above effectiveness in their response.

This is why I come back to the resolution that was passed in the Senate in a bipartisan expression of our support for the State of Israel, our condemnation of this action by terrorists and their State sponsors, and our commitment, as the Government of the United States, to do all we can to see to it that the terrorists are defeated, that the people in the region have an opportunity to live in peace, and that once and for all throughout the world the world can be safe from the threat of those who would attack others and to do so in the most heinous way.

The kind of action that has been taken by these terrorists cannot be justified in any way, shape, or form, and it is altogether fitting for the Senate

to have expressed its resolve against this action.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KYL). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I speak in morning business about the issue that the two prior speakers—the Senator from South Carolina and the Senator from Arizona—spoke about, the Middle East. This is a key time. I hope we continue to stand by Israel very strongly, very resolutely, and recognize what we are experiencing today. We are experiencing a key global war on terrorism, which is the use of terrorist entities sponsored by state sponsors so that there is some sort of deniability by the state sponsor. But, nonetheless, there is real terrorism that is taking place.

There are real threats that are occurring and real attacks that are occurring. There are real responses that are needed.

That is what you have seen Israel doing today. Israel has been attacked. Hezbollah has been launching missiles into Israel, into major cities in Israel. That is what is occurring. Hezbollah is sponsored by the Iranians. Iran is the key sponsor of Hezbollah. Iran is the lead sponsor of terrorism in the world, according to our State Department and, I think, frankly, according to the intelligence entities around the world. They cannot sponsor the terror group and then deny responsibility for it and say they should be left alone and there should be no consequences.

We need to move aggressively against Iran in the United Nations and force the issue on Iran. Here I am talking about economic sanctions and political and diplomatic pressure on the Iranians for their state sponsorship of terrorism.

We are also seeing that in Syria. This body passed the Syrian Accountability Act. I urge the administration to use all tools available toward Syria, which is also a state sponsor of terrorism, in working with Hamas and Hezbollah and other groups in this region.

I get concerned when a lot of people look at it and say Israel shouldn't be doing this or shouldn't respond. Certainly, we want all care to be given in any sort of military response so that innocent civilians are not hurt. We want to urge that sort of restraint, but by the same token, if the United States were attacked by terrorist groups sponsored by other countries operating off foreign soil, the United States would act aggressively and respond. We would not allow this to continue. We would say our citizens are being attacked and we have the right as a sovereign nation to defend our people, as Israel does, and as any nation around the world does.

I hope we view this for what it is—a part of the global war on terrorism. These are terrorist tactics that are being used by terrorist groups, and they have state sponsors behind them.

I wish the situation were different today. I wish we were not here having to talk about the support for Israel in a military engagement in Lebanon. But the facts are what they are. We have to deal with the situation as it is. I believe we should be standing aggressively and firmly with Israel. They are a democratic country in the region. They are a strong ally of the United States. We have worked closely together over many years. They seek peace. They want peace as we want peace. Yet, at some point in time they have to respond to the attacks. That is what they are doing.

I am pleased that this body in a bipartisan fashion has stood with Israel.

ENERGY

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, the prior speaker from South Carolina talked about energy. We have to engage in energy strategies that pull us off of our addiction to Middle Eastern oil. We have a lot of plants coming on in ethanol production from grain. We need to move that as well—and plant materials and cellulosic alcohol from grain. We can produce about 10 percent of our fuel needs from grain, corn, milo-based ethanol. From the cellulosic material, we can get another 30 percent.

We need a rapid expansion of plants and investment in this field. It is starting to take place. It is very encouraging. The economics are at work, particularly when you are looking at over \$70 per barrel of oil. We can produce energy cheaper than \$70 a barrel oil and get off the addiction. We need more of our cars running on 85-percent ethanol rather than 10-percent ethanol. We need more plug-in technologies where we have more cars that are using electricity rather than gasoline so we can break the addiction.

This country can do it with our technology and our willingness and with the economics of today. We can do it. And it is a matter of utmost national security to break that addiction. It is time, I believe, that we in this body take up additional energy legislation. It is time we do that.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DEMINT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of our morning business time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, morning business time is yielded back.